

REMARKS

After entry of the above amendments, the claims pending in the subject application are 1-11. Reconsideration of this application based on the Amendments and Remarks presented herein is respectfully requested.

It is acknowledged that claims 7-11 would be allowable if rewritten to correct the antecedent basis rejection in claim 7.

DRAWING OBJECTIONS

In claim 6, an elastomer covering is claimed, but it is alleged that it is not shown in the drawings. Also, feature 34 is not described in the drawing. Both of these have been corrected by adding reference number 34 to page 4, line 14 of the specification. The reference number is now described in the specification, and the elastomer covering is shown in the drawings.

35 U.S.C. §112 REJECTIONS

Claims 1 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph for reciting "said second collar". Claims 1 and 7 have been amended to state "a second collar". It is respectfully submitted that claims 1 and 7 are not indefinite.

35 U.S.C. §103 REJECTIONS

Claims 1-3 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 3,990,596 to Hoftman in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,692,630 to Hsu and U.S. Patent No. 4,497,417 to Tabet.

The limitation from claim 4, which was not rejected, was added to claim 1. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-2 and 5 are patentable over U.S. Patent No. 3,990,596 to Hoftman in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,692,630 to Hsu and U.S. Patent No. 4,497,417 to Tabet.

Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the references applied to claim 1 above and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,073,788 to Stroud.

Claim 6 depends from claim 1. From above, claim 1 is patentable over the cited references. Therefore, claim 6 is also patentable over the cited references.

OBVIOUSNESS-TYPE DOUBLE PATENTING REJECTIONS

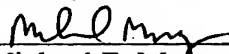
Claims 1-6 were provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-6 of copending daughter application 10/689,009 in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,990,596 to Hoftman.

Enclosed is a Terminal Disclaimer to overcome this rejection.

In view of the amendments and remarks contained above, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application, withdrawal of the 35 USC §102, §103, §112, and obviousness-type double patenting rejections, and request that a Formal Notice of Allowance be issued for claims 1-11. Should the Examiner have any questions about the above remarks, the undersigned attorney would welcome a telephone call.

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Respectfully submitted,



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